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County Life

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Moth magic
A look into the night-time critters
on page 2

Good for the sole
A clue around the infamous shoe tree in Minden
on page 10

Calling all readers!
Books and Brews launches at Haliburton Highlands Brewing on page 12

Giddy up!
A horse and rider enjoy a beautiful day at a past Wilberforce Fair. The fair will be returning this coming weekend in Highlands East. /FILE

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Naturally Yours

Great tiger moth/photos by Rick Whitteker

Lightsheet featuring a variety of moths in the area.

Life after dark

THIS YEAR there is a welcomed increase in flutter around the porch light. Bringing back memories of the camp lanterns and cottage lights of my youth, moths appear to be making a comeback in the summer of 2025. Perhaps it is the warm nights or part of a natural cycle but, no matter what the reason, it is good to see more life after dark.

If you only think of moths when you see holes in your clothing or pesky flyers interrupting your late evening barbeque, it is time to learn more about the wonderful world of moths. Living in the shadow of their fancy daytime cousin, the butterfly, most moths are active at night, often flying under the radar of our notice.

To get more insight into the moths of Haliburton County, I reached out to local naturalist Ed Poropat. Ed is presently working on a complete life science inventory of an area of Haliburton County. I asked Ed what interested him the most about moths. "It is their astounding diversity," explaining that in one evening moth survey, he counted over 200 different species of moth. It is estimated that Ontario has over 3,000 different species of moths as compared to about 150 different species of butterflies.

RICK WHITTEKER
Naturally Yours

Moth diversity comes in different forms: their unique colours, variety of shapes and size ranging "from two to three millimeters to the size of your hand like the cecropia moth." Ed explained that most moths are adapted to blend in with tree bark and leaf litter while resting during the day, "but some are stunningly colourful."

Taking the pollinator night shift, moths provide an important ecological function. Sucking up nectar with their long, coiled tongue, during the process of feeding, moths pollinate a variety of nighttime flowering plants. Evening primrose, as the name implies, open their yellow blooms at dusk, releasing a sweet fragrance that is irresistible to moths. Jasmine is another nighttime bloomer which relies on moths to pollinate. Moths also play a role in the pollination of strawberries, tomatoes and squash.

The greatest ecological impact of moths is in their larval stage as caterpillars. Sometimes quite destructive, moth caterpillars are small, mobile protein factors, converting plant material into the necessary nutrients that helps them grow and eventually metamorphosize. These tasty, bite-size morsels are a very important protein source for birds and their offspring. One study found that of all arthropod food sources, caterpillars were especially important to songbirds like vireos, chickadees, sparrows and warblers. Caterpillars are an important food source for other wildlife such as bats, mice, spiders and predatory wasps.

The giant tiger moth is a remarkable species found in Haliburton County. It draws its name from the bold contrasting colouration of gold and black. Ed explained that they are "bad tasting so this bright colouration would advertise that to potential predators." Like the monarch caterpillar, the tiger moth caterpillar eats plant matter that is high in bitter tasting alkaloids that are passed on into the adult stage.

Not only that, "some moths in this group even make sounds that let bats know they are not palatable," says Ed. The tiger moth has survived bat predation over millions of years. Ed explained that "some researchers have suggested that when being attacked by bats, these clicks generated by some tiger moths are somehow able to distract or "jam" the echolocation abilities of the bats allowing them to evade the attack!"

Moths are also known for their mimicry, developing large "eye spots" on their wings. These spooky orbs are flashed at would-be predators; a behaviour known as startle response. These highly contrasting circular rings can deter predators from attacking by masquerading as an owl.

Moths and butterflies belong to the same order of insects called Lepidoptera. They both go through complete metamorphosis, completing four stages from egg to winged adult. Butterflies are active during the day and moths at night, but there are exceptions to this rule. One mostly consistent feature of difference between the two is their antennae.

Most male moths have feathery or leaf shaped antennae and whereas female moths have thin sting-like antennae. Butterflies have antennae that are thin and hairless ending in a small ball or club. Using their antennae like a sensory organ, male moths can detect scents and pheromones from great distances, helping them to find food and mates. Like using our hands to "read" surfaces in the dark, moth antennae are highly tactile, helping them to navigate in dark and dimly lit environments.

You can help moths by avoiding pesticides and bug zappers, reducing the amount of lawn you maintain and planting native plants that bloom at different times. Leaving leaf litter and dead plant matter on the ground, especially under trees and shrubs, will support moths in completing their life cycle. Finally, minimize the use of exterior lights at night. Artificial light confuses moths. Fluttering around lights make them more vulnerable to predation and it takes moths away from feeding, pollinating and breeding, more important quests in their short adult lifespan.

Let's hope this resurgence of moths is not temporary. We all benefit in the diversity of living things and we can all help in cultivating wildlife diversity by everyday choices we make.

County Life

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Canadian Tire *

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Todd's Independent *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

Painting for beginners

MIDSUMMER. OUR cozy village becomes much busier, so the backyard lately suggests we stop the world and decompress a little closer to home.

Today I spot monarch butterflies on garden milkweed. They're possibly leaving eggs after feeding on nearby nectar. This also incidentally pollinates wildflowers and crops in a self-perpetuating ecosystem whose layers of efficiency expand towards our own sustainability.

Monarchs overwinter in California and central Mexico. Their legendary annual north-south migrations are real. They apparently never reach Newfoundland and Labrador, which, remarkably, also claim an absence of native milkweed, raccoons, skunks, porcupines, reptiles and amphibians. And that also means no snakes or turtles!

I always learn new stuff when I research to write. My 12-year-old self is born again. Renewed wonder might be a natural byproduct of my 'second childhood,' but it happens extra in these Highlands. I had summers off during my city career, and though working kept me young-at-heart, it also kept me indoors. July and August were for taking the kids to glorious places (including Newfoundland), and me to painting classes in both North Bay and Haliburton.

Watercolour was my first choice since it introduced the freedom of 'happy accidents.' Acrylics were a secondary experiment, and initially very limiting. But they've finally opened pathways where I risk much brighter colours, use wood as canvas, and express as whimsically as I dare. They've lately become my general direction, and I relax there as well, understanding their alternative capacities, and the unforeseen notion that I needn't frame my finished efforts. Acrylics still feel slightly less 'organic', but I play like a kid with infinite colours, and distill my random ideas into blocks of crisp delighted strokes.

But. Now I'm aiming for something else. Gouache. I've ordered both kit and sturdy sketch block (where one separates small pages with a dull knife), and reviewed some YouTube guidelines after asking my art group for overviews. They've already discovered gouache, know everything I don't, and broken down its nuances into easy language.

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

Gouache is essentially a thickened water-based, tint-rich paint which achieves opaqueness sooner than the delicate layering of watercolours, but with better fluidity than acrylics. Online tutorials continue, though I'll evolve mostly through practice. As with any relationship, commitment comes after trial and error, so I'm expecting persistent humility this summer before I also adopt gouache.

My longtime cottage painting pal studied gouache one northern summer week. She's since returned to watercolour, and has depicted many a stunning monarch. Such are obviously tricky to paint, and I doubt that Haliburton's Rails End Gallery will feature butterflies in its estimable 'en plein air' exhibition! But who knows? Painting anything into permanence requires human courage, which in turn needs nature for posterity. 'The arts help us see each other,' I once heard Toronto mayor Olivia Chow explain.

Monarchs aren't solely throned, aristocratic, reigning figureheads. Ontario's green spaces feature their very own intrepid bright-winged long-distance majesties. Many of them die days after laying eggs. Life is basically about making more.

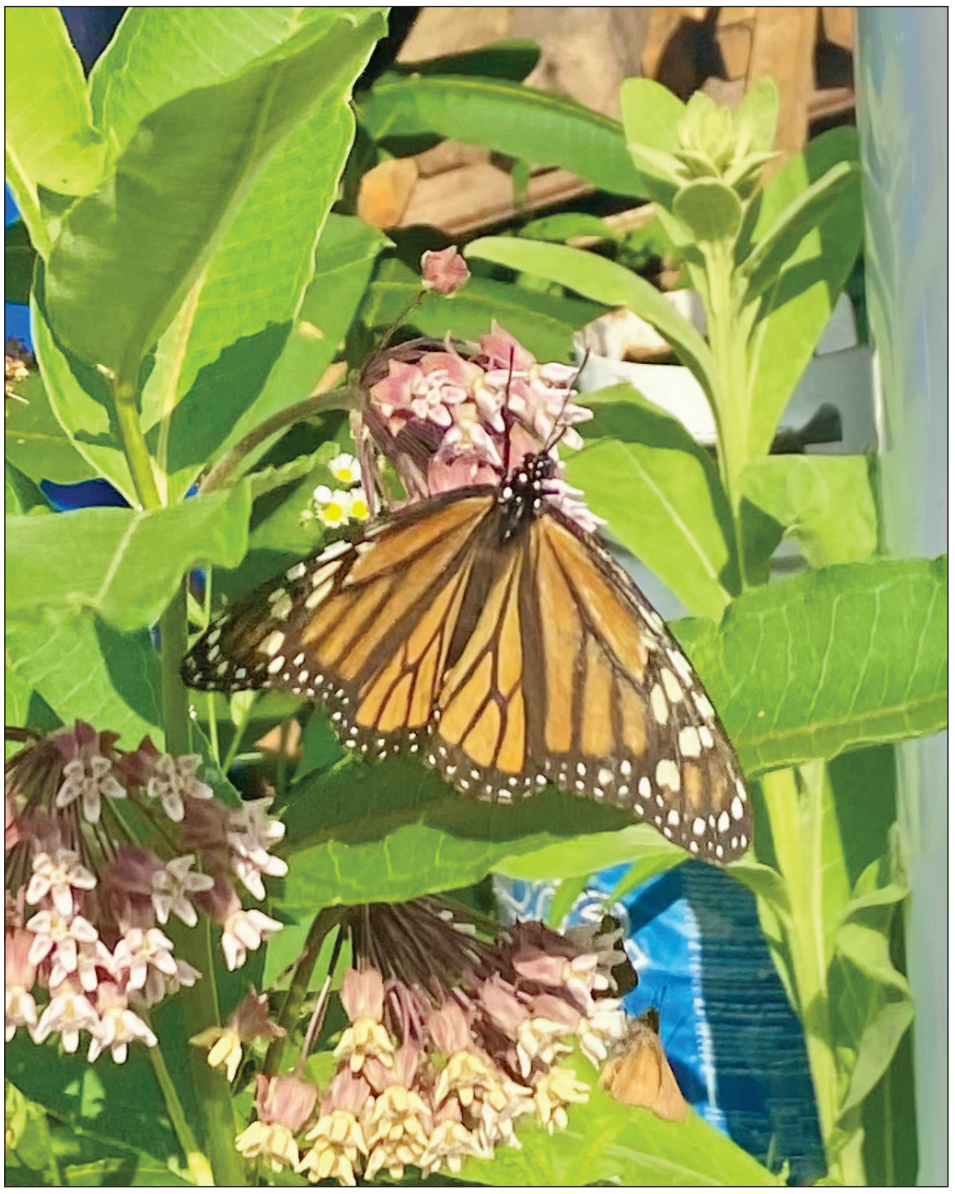

photo by Deb Reed

Sweet summer sounds
Singer-songwriter Shannon Butcher performs with Michael Shand during Rotary's weekly Music in the Park at Head Lake on July 29. /ADAM FRISK staff

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Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkks!

SOME OF us have spouses that hunt, or at least come from families where hunting was a normal part of life. Others have partners who just don't appreciate hunting – until an earwig shows up in the kitchen.

My spouse Jenn's father was a hunter, so she kind of gets it. The issue is she'd rather not see it. She's one of those live and let live kind of people. Jenn would literally never hurt a fly.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

That's why she has me. I am the fly hurter. But, even then, she only wants me to use only as much force as required.

But things are different when it comes to earwigs – or as Jenn calls them "Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkks!"

Jenn may not appreciate the skill it takes to bring home the number of ducks, grouse, woodcock, geese or the turkey or deer I bring home almost every season, but she holds that skill in high regard when it comes to Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkks.

As a result of trying to impress her, I have become one of the world's foremost authorities on Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk hunting.

Many people ask me what it takes to be able to stand your ground and keep calm in the face of a charging bull Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk. I'd tell you raw courage, but it is much more than that.

You need to be able to keep a straight face too.

Giggle just once. Make light of the significance or threat of the wily Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk in the slightest, and you are then dealing with an even more fearsome creature – the angry spouse.

As a result, I take my duties very seriously, whenever I am called to control a rogue Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk, as I was this morning.

When Jenn made the call from the upstairs washroom, I immediately donned my safari hat and favourite calibre of paper towel, and I rushed to the scene.

Once there, I found Jenn frozen in terror, with the belligerent Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk a mere two yards away.

"That's a big one," I said coolly. Then I tested the wind.

"That's gross," Jenn said, as she left.

At times like this, when a hunter is alone with a mature, unpredictable Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk a lot of things go through your mind. Mostly, "I wonder how this safari hat looks on me?"

Then, you begin the stalk.

This morning, it was a tough one, as there was no cover between the beast and me. This meant I had to time my steps. Whenever it blinked, I moved.

Before long, I was in range.

This of course it the most dangerous time. When you are within charging range of a wild Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk anything can happen.

Which is why I make no apology for standing on the vanity, yelling "Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk!"

Fortunately, it was a bluff charge and after I regained my composure I began another stalk. This time by circling around behind it.

When I finally pounced, there was a bit of a tussle, but in the end, I prevailed, though it was touch and go for a moment or two.

Afterwards, I took the obligatory hero photos with me kneeling behind my vanquished prey. And then, after being denied permission from Jenn to get the head mounted so I could place it atop the peak of the garage, I disposed of it.

Even so, I texted her the photo later that day, just to impress her further.

She simply replied "Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeekkkkk!"

Loon and baby by Jill Moulton

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid euchre 1 p.m., Cornhole 7 p.m. (upstairs)
Tuesday: Last Tuesday of the month-liver luncheon with one alternative 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Wednesday: Mixed darts 7:30 p.m. Canteen opens at 6 p.m.
Thursday: General meeting (3rd week) Members only 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Chair yoga 10 a.m. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. play at 6:45 p.m.
Saturday: Meat draw 5 p.m. Canteen opens at 3 p.m.
Sunday: Ladies Auxiliary meeting (members only) 3rd week at 2 p.m.
Special events: May 11 Mother's day breakfast $13.00/person
Friday night BBQ
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices. Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays: Aug. 11, 18, 25 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27 Darts $4/player 2 p.m.
Aug. 13, 20, 27 Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Thursdays: Aug. 14, 28 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Aug. 14, 21, 28 Horseshoes $5/player 7 p.m.
Fridays: Aug. 15, 29 Wings and Jam Session $15/lb 5 to 8 p.m.
Aug. 8, 22 Community Care 55+ Lunch $17, noon
Aug. 8, 22 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20
Saturdays: Aug. 9, 16, 30 Board Games 2 p.m.
Aug. 9, 16, 23, 30 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Aug. 23 Ladies Auxiliary Appreciation Day 2 to 6 p.m.
Aug. 23 Karaoke 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
August 30 Trivia Night 7 p.m.
Sundays: Aug. 10 L.A Breakfast $10. 9 to 11 a.m.
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-2221

Writing on the Senior Side

An ice cream summer

GAIL STELTER

County Life Contributor

Mom gave me a nickel for a popsicle. I walked to the corner to Potter's grocery store. I was too young to know we called him "Old Man Potter," but I was old enough to know he seldom smiled and didn't seem to like kids.

"I would like a popsicle, please."

"You don't have enough money. Go home."

I went home and told mom. She said, "Gates, you do have enough money. Popsicles cost five cents. A nickel is five cents."

I went back to the store.

"May I please buy a popsicle?"

"No, you don't have enough money. Go home."

Now, I was in tears. I went home. Mom said, "Jimmy, go to the store with Gail and see what is going on."

"Hello, Mr. Potter. My sister would like to buy a popsicle. She has a nickel. Why did you send her home?"

"She didn't say popsicle. She said Pepsi-Cola."

I was five years old. I guess my pronunciation of "popsicle" didn't sound right to him, but he didn't even try to help. That was the last time I went by myself to Old Man Potter's.

Mom gave me a dime for an ice cream. I walked to the corner to Doc's drug store. Doc was always friendly. Ice cream cost seven cents.

"Hi Gail, what can I get for you today?"

" Hi, may I please have a chocolate ice cream?"

"Sure," said Doc.

The ice cream was in a freezer behind the counter. Doc was the only one who could get the ice cream. That's because it had to be unrolled into the cone. Borden's MelOrol ice cream was introduced to Canada through Borden›s Dairies in 1937. For retail stores in Canada, the rolls were packed twenty-four to a carton. Each roll was a cylinder about three inches long, one inch in diameter, and came wrapped in peel-away paper. It was an art to remove the paper, unroll and place the ice cream in the cone. Doc was an expert. I loved ice cream. It was the best summer treat. I don't remember having ice cream at any other time of the year, though I suppose many other families did enjoy it in different seasons.

Seventy years later, I still love ice cream, and chocolate is still my favourite. However, a new second

favourite has emerged: Moose Tracks. Yes, the best Haliburton ice cream comes from Kawartha Dairy, and I have decided this is my ice cream summer. In the past, I would occasionally have an ice cream cone during the summer, and sometimes in other seasons as well. This year, I have two tubs in my freezer, and I alternate between my favourites. Most evenings, I indulge in a small cone at home. (1/2 cup is 200 calories) I love my ice cream summer. Maybe I will make it a summer tradition, or perhaps a bucket list item is a better way to look at it. Bucket list items seem more important, but then I don't believe in having a bucket list. I will call it "My Simple Delights Not to be Missed List."

My ice cream summer has also been a reward at the end of a day of long summer swims in the lake and hours of editing my family stories book.

Recently, my usual 20 to 30 minute swim stretched to 40 minutes of "pushing it" among the strong waves from summer fun boaters. I am accustomed to sharing the lake. Summer fun is for us all. It was not about the extra time it took. I can swim, albeit slowly, for a long time, but the extra effort and strokes were tiring. They were also well worth it. I remember thinking that my ice cream summer was well-earned that day.

Another of my ice cream celebrations came when I finished and presented my final project to a panel at U of T, and received my Certificate in Creative Writing: six courses and a final project. Done. Feels good, but almost anticlimactic. It is so much more than the certificate. I learned so much. I am a writer. I love learning, I love proving to myself that I am, indeed, not too old to learn and do new things.

More ice cream is coming my way. Soon, I will also be a published book author. It's done … sort of. My family stories book came in at 59,297 words and is now with my publisher. It feels amazing to have gotten to this point. I sent it in yesterday and have already thought of a couple of additional stories for it, but not going there.

So many thoughts along the journey to arrive here. What if my computer breaks or is stolen before I get done? Will I live long enough to finish it? When do I stop editing and write new fiction stories? When do I get to write a mystery novel? There is still more work to do to get to the final product. There will, no doubt, be more editing. I need to start choosing pictures and thinking about the title and front, and back covers.

I will get it done, and my reward will be holding the book in my hands and giving copies to my children and grandkids (and an ice cream). This was why, at 73 years old, I said, "I want to be a writer when I grow up".

My dad once said to me, "Gates, my mother would have loved you, and you would have loved her. You are a lot like her."

I never knew that grandma who died before I was born. Not only would I have liked to know her, I wanted to know her story, her childhood and how she ended up in the small town of Quyon, Quebec, married to my grandfather. If even just one of my grandchildren, or as yet unborn great-grandchildren, wants to know about me, he or she will have my book and know my story. I hope that others will also read my book, and perhaps naively, I think other Baby Boomers will connect and enjoy the stories too, but if they don't, that's okay.

My published book, my ending will be a new beginning. There is so much more to write.

So, I am enjoying my ice cream summer, and I am having fun swimming and writing. These are good things when you are living on the senior side. I hope that you are having an ice cream summer and enjoying whatever that might mean to you.

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The in-betweens

I SPEND a lot of time writing about my son.

This comes easily. He's less than a year-and-a-half old.

While we're given the responsibility of watching our children grow and learn, the reality of the situation is that they're teaching us more. Each and every day.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

While I explore the ins and outs of raising a pre-toddler, my husband and I are simultaneously navigating the realities of pre-teens.

My husband and his daughters were a package deal when we got together, nearly a decade ago. And those early days were filled with sweetness and sass. I loved every moment.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I left my full-time job with the Township of Minden Hills and dove head-first into homeschooling, a decision I have not once regretted.

As a step-parent, this bonus time with the girls was truly a gift. While the world spun and sputtered through rocky terrain, our world stood still; the perimeters of exploration limited to the four walls of our home, while our imaginations ran wild.

We spent countless hours making homemade lemonade, carving cottages for woodland creatures out of cardboard boxes, hanging twinkly lights along our front porch while thunderstorms rolled in, watching tadpoles in ponds kick their little back legs into life.

It was a beautiful chapter, for my connection with them, and my connection with my inner child. A time where the pace slowed, and the priorities shifted.

Of course, before long, the schools opened up again and along with them, access to sports, extra-curriculars, and after-school programs.

Now don't get me wrong, I am thrilled that the kids are continuing to find their ways in this world amongst their peers, but there was something special about hitting that pause button on their childhood when we could.

And now here we are, in the in-betweens. In parenting books and forums, you're often warned about specific age ranges. The 'terrible twos', the teenage years. There are marked thresholds that parents can plan and prepare for whatever challenges may arise.

But so rarely do we hear about the in-betweens. The girls are now 10 and 12. Right in the middle of childhood and adolescence. And as I watch them weave and wander through this chapter, I realize that it's a window into their lives that's infrequently discussed.

I think the chapter can be defined by an equal pull of waiting and longing. Waiting for teenage years to hit. For their first locker. For their first car. For their first dates. Their little toes - once clad in sparkly boots or pink silky ballet flats - are now dangling at the edge of the next chapter.

And while they look ahead, they can't help but look back. Longing for the simplicity of childhood once again, the naivety that comes alongside the natural whimsy and wonder. Longing for their favourite sweater to fit again, when unexpected growth spurts take hold in what seems like a matter of hours. Longing for a piece of the past with a sliver of the future.

So while books are quick to by-pass these in-between years and skip right to the mega milestones, I think it's important to sit in this time for a bit. With our kids who have one foot in a door to the past with the other stepping towards the future.

Because while they seem like they're marching their way towards independence, they still have their childhood hearts, wrapped in whimsy and wonder. And while we're given the responsibility of watching our children grow and learn, the reality of the situation is that they're teaching us more. Each and every day.

Top 10 Hints that your psychic cannot be trusted

I AM SKEPTICAL when it comes to psychic. But I also believe a person should come to an opinion on their own, after doing some research. While you're doing that, here are my top 10 hints that your psychic cannot be trusted.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. Was surprised to learn you weren't paying them.
2. Always jumps when you yell "Boo!"
3. When you say, "I'd like to contact my late mother", he or she assumes she's passed on, rather than tardy and out of cell coverage.
4. Texts to say, "Will be an hour late. Caught in traffic."
5. Keeps muttering, "I did not see that coming!"
6. Crystal ball is heavy and black with three finger holes in it.
7. Got unexpectedly hit by a frisbee in face.
8. Bet $500 on Old Slowpoke to win.
9. Tells you balloon pants will one day be back in style.
10. Predicts you will do well in life – and yet here you are writing Top 10 lists.

Touchstones

Blue eye of Lake blinking up at me, fringed by
eyelashes of pines,
a school of minnow clouds floating up in Sky, as I
pause along the trail to rest,
my chest, heaving, from climbing all morning long,
leaning my shoulder against a boulder that
flanks the trail,
tree roots, bulging like veins, slithering along the
ground, as I stumble and trip,
the trail, slippery in parts, after Rain, my feet feeling
their way over mounds of earth, roots, thick as snakes,
my hands slapping the flanks of boulders, these
touchstones along the trail, that steady me,
as I maneuver my way up towards the Look Out,
dangling branches grazing my arms as I push them
out of the way,
the puddle of Lake, below, glinting in the sunlight,
inspiring me to keep going, invisible birds,
serenading the trail,
nestled in their branches as I clomp, up and up,
step by step, staring straight ahead instead of peering
down at the ground,
my feet leading me, along with my eyes, Air, clear
and fresh after Rain, warmed by Sun,
the trail riddled with rocks and roots, as my feet
navigate this obstacle course, watching a green leaf
flutter prematurely from its tree,
wondering whether its stem was weak or its branch
was too cluttered, forcing the leaf to fall,
the faintest wisp of a sound as it lands on the
ground, between a rock and root, I crouch down
to pick it up,
twirling its stem between my fingers, inhaling the
green of its skin, carrying it along with me as I clamber
up and up,
sometimes, the incline, so jagged and steep, I grip
on to the spindly trunks of trees, to steady me,
the blue eye of Lake, blinking through the pines,
how long it's been, since I've climbed this high,
glimpsing the hills as I approach a clearing, staring
straight at the humps of their spines,
the fragrance of pine, perfuming Air, as I lean
against another boulder to rest, closing my eyes,
for a moment,
to inhale the aroma of the trail and listen to birdsong
drench Air, not a worry or care when I'm up here,
focusing on every step and every Breath, along this
winding trail, 'till I reach the Look Out,
just me and the stray leaf, that dangles from my
fingers, as much a touchstone as the boulders that
steady me along the way,
wondering who will be there to catch me if I fall,
and pick me up off the ground with tenderness
and care,
I lay the leaf on a rock overlooking the puddle of
Lake, I stare out at the vista of Sky and hills,
still as the earth beneath my feet and the rocks that
steady me as I climb, the blue eye of Lake,
meeting mine,
the pines fringing it, so tiny, they fit between my
index finger and thumb, sunlight streaming down
from a clear blue Sky,
swallowing the school of minnow clouds, whole, I
rest on a bench made of stone, looking out at the
splendor of it all,
not thinking about it that I will have to navigate my
way down the twisting trail the same way
I clomped up,
gazing out at the hills instead, their permanence, a
touchstone for me, even when I'm not here,
knowing when I return, there they'll still be, silent
and solid and still, sunlight spilling along their flanks,
soaking the Lake,
its blue eye blinking up at me, as I drink in its
beauty that never grows old, the fragrance of pine,
drenching my Breath,
as I inhale, slow and deep, before I begin the long
and steep journey back down.

Sylvie Kalenda

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August 8 & 9, 2025

KIDS' WORLD

Friday, August 8th

5:00 p.m. Gates Open, Opening Ceremonies with RCL Colour Guard
★ Arena Opens with Homecraft Exhibits, Live Music, Vendors, Antique & Classic Cars
Live Stage Show - Geoff Webber and Friend
Petting Zoo
Ball Hockey on the tennis court (bring your own stick & ball)
5:30 p.m. Pedal Tractor Test Drive
6:00 p.m. Pet Show Registration, show starts at 6:30 p.m.
Pony Pull
Cake Walk -Outside
7:00 p.m. Bingo - Community Centre (doors open at 6:00 p.m.)

Saturday, August 9th

9:00 a.m. Gates Open
★ Arena Opens with Homecraft Exhibits, Entertainment, Vendors, Antique & Classic Cars
10:00 a.m. Pony Rides & Petting Zoo
Kid's World Activities Open
Live Stage show - Gord Kidd & Friends
Painting Demonstrations with Luann Coghlan
Fire Fighter's Kids Activities
Scarecrow Building Contest - Outside (Judging at 4 pm)
Nail Driving Contest - Outside
Corn Hole Tournament -Youth Division - Curling Club
★ Penny Raffle - in the Arena
Pedal Tractor Pull Weigh in and Registration
10:30 a.m. Pedal Tractor Pull
11:00 a.m. Pockets the Clown, Magic Show
Sheep Shearing Demo - in the Animal Shelter
Fire Department Food Booth & Corn on the Cob
Rhythmania - Outside
12:00 p.m. Mask Decorating - Curling Club
1:00 p.m. Sheep Shearing Demo - in the Animal Shelter
Corn Hole Tournament - Adult Division, Curling Club
2:30 p.m. ★ Penny Raffle Drawing & Sweet Auction - Arena
3:00 p.m. Light Horse Draw followed by Heavy Horse Draw
Sheep Shearing Demo - in the animal shelter
5:00 p.m. Family Dinner - Community Centre

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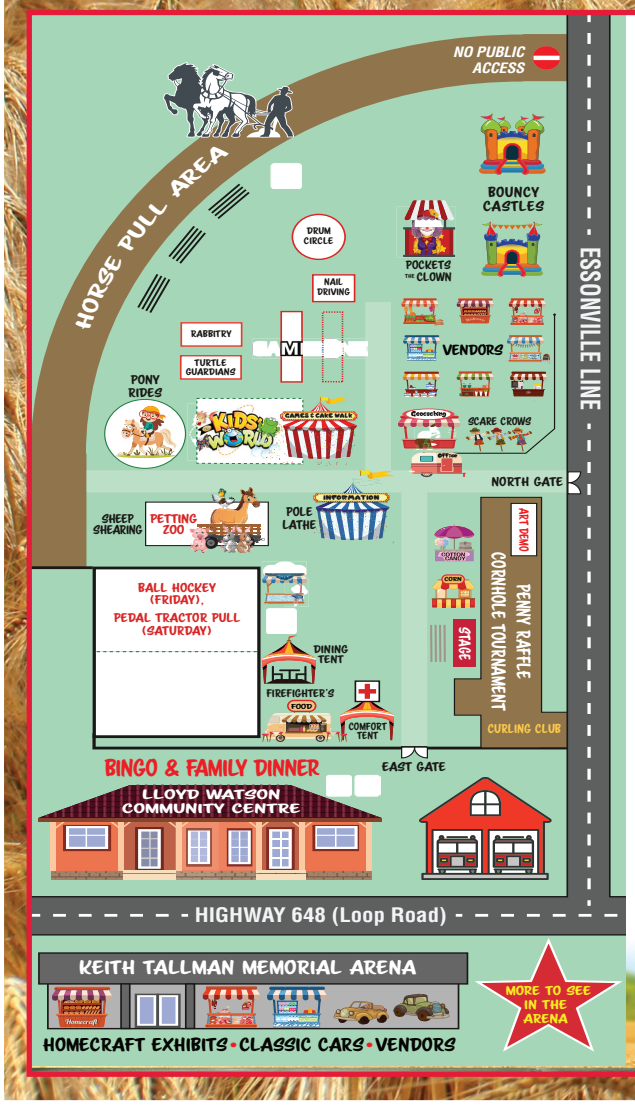

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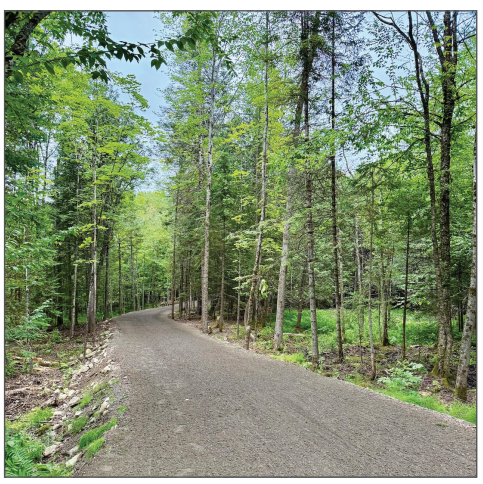

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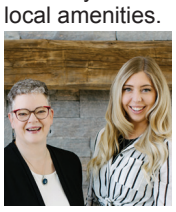

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Sole searching: 'shoe tree' mystery one step closer to being solved

ADAM FRISK
County Life Staff

Minden's infamous "shoe tree" pictured on July 24, 2025. /ADAM FRISK staff

It's been around for decades and has survived harsh winters, ice storms and drought. But its sole purpose still remained a mystery. Until now.

Minden's infamous "shoe tree" has been a popular roadside attraction for visitors to the area for many years but the lore and history of the tree remained unclear, leaving many stumped as to why adorning shoes to a tree is a thing people do and how it came to be in the first place.

"I know almost nothing about it," Kelly Outram, who lives a shoe's throw away from the tree, said in a July 22 interview. "I just know it has been there for over 30 years, at least."

Located on South Lake Road, the tree, at times, can be hard to spot but it seems that it has become some sort of an urban legend with visitors actively seeking it out.

"People are stopping all the time," Outram said. "If I'm just hanging out doing yard work at my house, I hear people pull up to the shoe tree on a regular basis in the summertime. I always think it's someone coming up my driveway.

"But then I look and I'm like 'Oh it's just someone hanging shoes in the shoe tree or taking a picture," he explained.

Hundreds of shoes have been either nailed to the tree or tied together and flung over branches. There's even a wooden board with 10 pairs of shoes nailed to it with a last name painted on it, like a plaque of sorts, hammered into the tree, about 30 feet from the ground.

Outram, who ironically is an arborist, estimates the large white pine to be about 90 years old and to be relatively healthy with all things considered.

"It splits into two stems about 60 feet up and one of them is dead so it's going to fall down and either land in the ditch or on the road one day," he said. "But the other stem is healthy so I hope the tree continues for a long time."

Outram doesn't seem to think the shoes are killing the tree but "they're not great for it."

"People say copper nails can poison a tree but using normal nails, it could be an avenue for disease over time," the arborist said. "But considering the tree is about 90 years old, it hasn't affected it terribly."

As for the lore, the arborist said he doesn't have a clue.

"I feel like it's something quirky someone just started doing and other people, they see it and they're like 'Oh I should do that too, that's neat,'" he said. "It might have been one family with a lot of shoes who started it, making it look like it's a happening situation."

Curious to find out more about the shoe tree mystery, Outram decided to reach out to someone who knows someone who said they know something about the tree. He said he was told that shoes were being tossed or hammered into the tree since 1976 and that there was another shoe tree across the road but people had complained about it.

But why were shoes being tossed into the tree in the first place?

Minden Hills Cultural Centre's Nadine Papp may have the answer.

"So the story I was told years ago was that there was a young child starting school here in Minden, in kindergarten," Papp said. "I think he was a little bit anxious about being away and not necessarily knowing how it all works. So for reassurance his mother decided to hammer a pair of his shoes to a tree to kind of give him a signal that he's getting close to home."

The shoes were meant to act as a marker for the child to get ready to get off the school bus so he wouldn't miss his stop on South Lake, Papp said.

"That's the story that I heard, and it was in the mid '80s," she said. "I may have been told the story in the late '80s though, it was many years ago.

"So that was the story I heard, but I like it though, you know," Papp said.

The county is dotted with similar trees decorated with various footwear but the tree on South Lake Road seems to be the one that attracts the most kicks.

As for the tree being an eyesore for those in the area?

"No, not at all, I think it's neat!" Outram said. "It's like a landmark, it's novel."

Do you have a story to share about the shoe tree or know the lore behind it? Drop me a line at adam@haliburtonpress.com.

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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Xanthic frog by Gena Robertson

Dragonfly by Bonnie Hamburgh

Blue Jay by Tammy Nash

Heron chatting by Jill Moulton

Momma duck and twins by Debi Ireland

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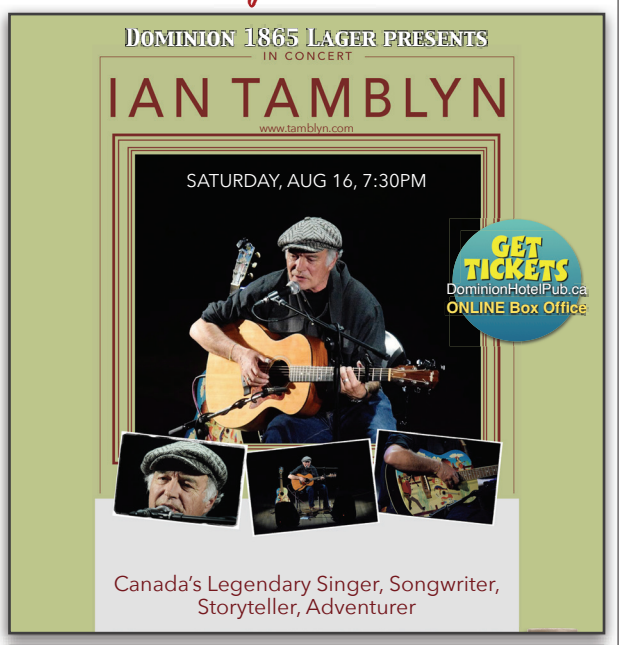

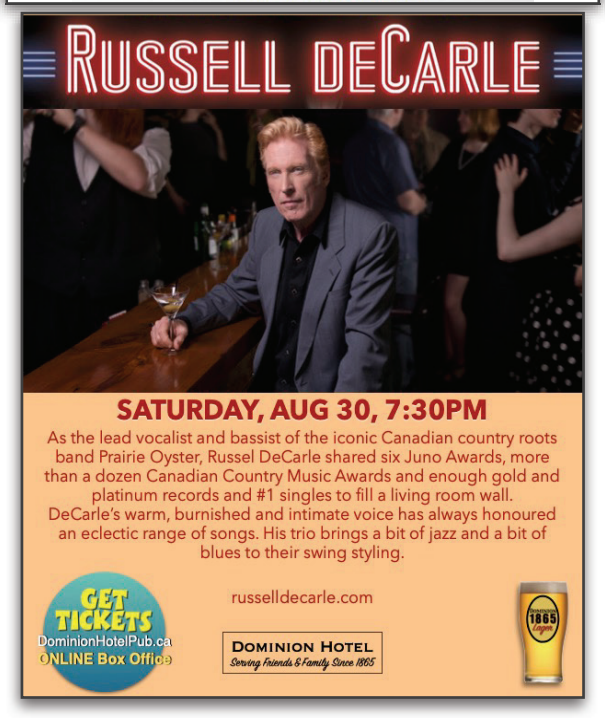
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Tue Aug 5	5:00	Tiki Tuesday	Jeff Moulton
Thu Aug 7	6:00	Gord Kidd Solo	Gord Kidd Solo
Sat Aug 9	6:00	Saturday Night Live	North of 7
Sun Aug 10	4:00	Caesar Sunday Happy Hour	Trina West
Tue Aug 12	6:00	Tiki Tuesday	Gord Kidd & Friends
Sun Aug 17	4:00	Caesar Sunday Happy Hour	Jazz Bros

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Books and Brews: the fastest growing book club in Carnarvon

THOMAS SMITH
County Life Staff

Last year, Haliburton Highlands Brewing moved from Abbey Gardens to the building beside Francis Thomas Contracting in Carnarvon. With significantly more seating area than their previous location, the brewery's front of house manager Heather Sedgwick and her team brainstormed events to bring more people into the brewery.

While several of their ideas were far-fetched, Sedgwick says that idea for a book club stuck with her and so she reached out to Shawna Gamblen, programming and Outreach Coordinator with the Haliburton County Public Library. Thus, the Books and Brews book club event with the library was born.

Fully supporting the program, Gamblen offered the list of book club sets of books. Due to their massive popularity and limited number of book club's book sets, Sedgwick was forced to quickly choose the list of books that the club will be reading for the entire year.

Sedgwick considers herself a big reader, with **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee claiming the title for her favourite book.

"I have read it eight or nine times," said Sedgwick.

Currently the club has 12 members that meets on the second Wednesday of every month, she said. Most recently, the club has read books including *The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club, North Woods* and *Killers of a Certain Age*. Members range widely in age from some in their 30s, to those in their 60s. Residents from all over the county participate, with the biggest majority coming from Minden and Haliburton.

With only eight physical copies available to the club, several members have chosen to rent audiobooks from the library and listen to them while heading to and from work.

"The first question we will ask is what you think of the book and that just gets the conversation going," said Sedgwick. "It is not just about the story, but how it is told."

> *The group that is here is amazing. Everybody is very respectful of everyone else's opinions and outlooks on the books.*
>
> — Heather Sedgwick, Haliburton Highlands Brewing

North Woods by Daniel Mason was a highly divisive novel. With the plot following a property rather than specific characters, several members did not feel the need to finish the book. Another did not enjoy the repetitive poetry inclusions that Mason repeats throughout the novel.

"Other than *North Woods*, everybody has really enjoyed all of the books," said Sedgwick with a laugh.

With Killers of a Certain Age, Sedgwick says that the younger book club members felt that the novel was quite campy, whereas the older members felt that it was funny. Other novels have dealt with the loss of children and family members and Sedgwick says that many members have opened up about themselves and feel as though the group is closely connected.

"The most current book is always the favourite one," said Sedgwick.

Sedgwick's favourite part of the book club is that she can have a social outing at her place of work.

"It is kind of fun to have the book club to look forward to each month," said Sedgwick. "It is kind of nice to have different tastes and inputs so that we don't have the same style of books we are reading."

Sedgwick assures that while the members can be divided in their opinion, no fights have broken out. Everyone is encouraged to share their thoughts, especially about disappointing endings.

Growing in size, Sedgwick says that one member is even bringing a friend from out of town, with the book from her own local library to participate in the discussion.

"Shawna has been really good. She checks in and makes sure things are going well ," said Sedgwick.

Gamblen has even offered that the club's books be delivered to the Stanhope location of the library to make it easier on the members.

A huge success, the book club continues to run throughout the summer.

"If you have plans, you have plans but we have had a really good group. The smallest we have had is seven," said Sedgwick.

All of the members read at different paces. Whether you are a voracious bookworm or someone looking to dip their toe in the hobby of reading, Books and Brews is welcome to anyone.

"You don't know how things are going to be received, but we have met some really wonderful people who have started to join for other events," said Sedgwick.

Other events at Haliburton Highlands Brewing include their Stich and Sip event, Ukelele Night, famous Bingo dinner event, and regular music nights. Once a month, they even have a bellydance workshop.

"Just come. Everybody is so welcoming," said Sedgwick. "The group that is here is amazing. Everybody is very respectful of everyone else's opinions and outlooks on the books."

Free to all participants, the Book and Brews book club meets every second Wednesday of the month. This month's book is *Big Lies in a Small Town* by Diane Chamberlain. Everyone is welcome to read the book in any format you desire and come out to the event on Aug. 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Haliburton Highlands Brewing is located at 15543 Highway 35 in Carnarvon and is a family-run business that serves award-winning beers.

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Haliburton Highlands Time Travellers Cruise Night
When: Thursday, Aug. 7
Kawartha Dairy, Minden 5:30 p.m. to dusk

Highlands Time Travellers Cruise Night
When: Thursday, Aug. 14
Where: Haliburton Library Parking lot, 5:30 p.m. to dusk

Anniversary Celebration Corn Roast
When: Friday August 15, 6 pm
Where: Red Cross Outpost Historic House, 2314 Loop Rd, Wilberforce
Come and join us for corn, hot dogs, cake and ice cream. Quilt raffle draw at 7:45 PM. Contact: Barb Schofield, 705-448-2598, wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Highlands Time Travellers Cruise Night
When: Tuesday, Aug. 19
Where: A&W Haliburton Library Parking lot, 5:30 p.m. to dusk

Old Times Afternoon Tea
When: Saturday August 23, 1 to 4 p.m.
Where: Red Cross Outpost Historic House, 2314 Loop Rd, Wilberforce
Enjoy old fashioned tea and sweets, by donation. Bring a friend and make new ones. Contact: Barb Schofield, 705-448-2598, wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Recurring events

Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library Book Nook Hours
When: 1st, 3rd Tuesday of the month - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills Branch, 176 Bobcaygeon Rd. Minden
Choose from a variety of gently read books: thrillers, mysteries, romance, biographies, children and youth selections, Canadian authors, fiction, science fiction/fantasy, sports, spiritual and other non-fiction books. Bring a reusable bag. Payment is by cash donation. All money raised supports library enhancements and programmes for all libraries in the county.

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome.

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness, Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Free Balanced Fitness, Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
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Haliburton Sculpture Forest Guided Walking Tours
When: Tuesdays in August, 10 a.m.
Where: 297 College Dr. Haliburton
A free guided walking tour. Meet at the kiosk in the Fleming College - Haliburton School of Art + Design parking lot. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Tours are held rain or shine and can take up to 2 hours. Tours are free but donations are greatly appreciated. For more information visit: www.haliburtonsculptureforest.ca

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

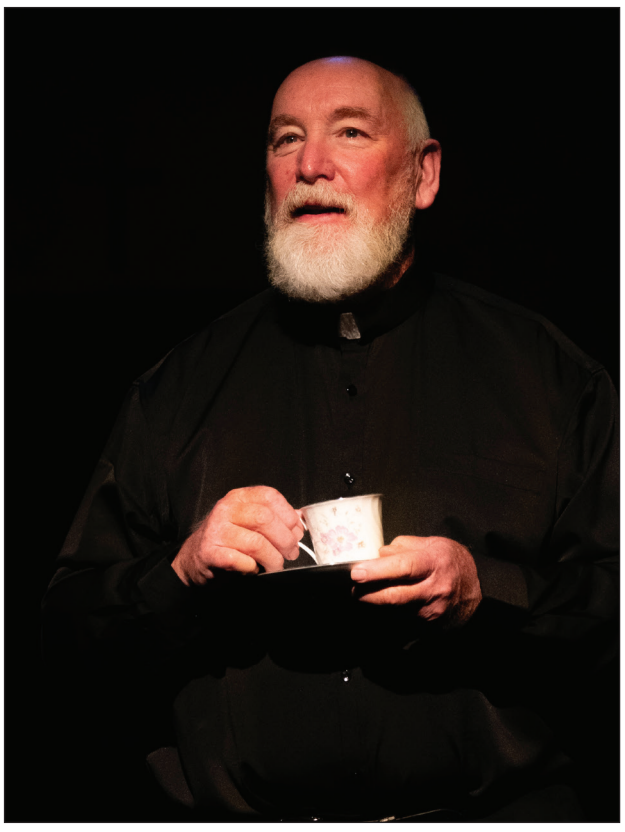
Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Please join us for safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 and 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw. Five spins for $10. First four rounds are for highest and lowest score with two winners per round. Last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Cheers!
In the last play of the Highlands Summer Festival season, a series of nuns took on the challenge of keeping their monastery open by making wine to sell in the show titled *Drinking Habits*. The hilarious farce of a show ran until Aug. 1 at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. /TIM YANO staff photographer



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Popular country band is coming to the Rodeo

THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
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Adding it all up:

Kennisis Lake tornado damage likely $5-million

by STEPHEN SHAW
Staff Reporter

The tornado that cut a swath through the Highlands last weekend left behind about $5-million damage to the Kennisis Lake alone.

As insurance adjusters tabulated claims reports, damage estimates began pouring into the Disaster Command Base at Kennisis Lake Marina showroom.

"The highest quote I've had so far was for a roof, car and property damages at $28,000," says Bill Elliott, lake association president and emergency relief co-ordinator .

"A lot of people are coming in with damage so extensive that they've just decided to bulldoze their whole area and sell it. A lot of people just don't want the hassle," said one resident.

The trail of destruction was likely the most severe damage in any area of the province, says Brian Donaldson, a municipal affairs senior advisor.

"It really takes you back to see the extent of the tree loss. It was incredible. It looks like a giant lawnmower came along and just cleared everything," says Donaldson, who surveyed the Kennisis and Redstone Lake areas in a plane last week. "In terms of the loss of trees, it's just devastating."

While the three tornadoes that ripped through south-central Ontario left many areas with equally substantial, if not more, structural ruin, the Highlands was likely the hardist hit region overall, he said.

"The damage was much more wide-spread. With the density of tree cover, I don't know how it could compare (to other areas)."

Provincial and municipal leaders are working to secure emergency financial assistance. The devastation in the Kennisis and Redstone Lake areas is unparralleled in the province because

HOW NOW SPOTTED COW: Devin Hogg tentatively reaches out to pet a cow at the petting zoo at Stanhope Fun Day on Saturday. His younger brother, Ryan, was less shy, later going right up to the placid bovine. For more pictures of Fun Day, please turn to page 24.

Cuts a necessary evil: Hodgson

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

If Highlanders think the provincial government's spending cuts will be painful, then Chris Hodgson asks them to think of the alternatives.

"It doesn't help Haliburton County if the province of Ontario goes broke," the Conservative MPP said in a telephone interview after Friday's cost-cutting announcements. "If the debt keeps on growing, we can't sustain any programs."

Hodgson echoes many of the themes expressed by Premier Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, the Minister of Finance.

"It's an action plan instead of wringing our hands, which wasn't what we were elected to do. Most people expected us to (make cuts) and get at it," says Hodgson, who is also the new Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and

"If the debt keeps growing, we can't sustain any programs"

bined Ministry is one of the ways they're trying to put their own financial house in order.)

Leaving the debt to grow to an estimated $12-billion is "unacceptable..." Spending cuts are necessary because "we hit the tax wall and we can't continue to borrow money."

Right now the province annually pays $8-billion to pay its debt loans. That's $8-billion which isn't filtering through the economy, Hodgson says. "Maybe what we should be doing is saying 'what's the priority and how much money do we have?'"

The finance minister says the province doesn't have much. Revenues are lower than projected by the NDP in the spring,

Without cuts, the deficit would be $1.4-billion more than expected. "We have to stop acting as if the problem was one of insufficient revenue."

Some of the cost-cutting initiatives, which total $1.9-billion, include:

• A 22% cut in welfare payments but with protection for seniors and the handicapped. Recipients will be allowed to work part-time so they can make up the difference. Payments will still be 10% higher than the national average, Eves said. In the past, in areas such as Haliburton County where more than 3.5% of the population depends on welfare, the province funded 100% on that portion of the cost instead of the usual 80%. Not any longer. But Eves said counties will recoup those costs through the reduced welfare payments.

• All social services falling under the Ministry of Community and Social Services will get a 2.5% funding cut on October 1, followed by a 5% cut for the next fiscal year.

• Employment equity, which didn't affect many local employers, and the advocacy commission will be scrapped.

• School boards will have to cut a combined $32-million from their budgets but the cuts can not affect classroom education. Colleges must cut $6.8-million and universities $16-million.

• All ministries will review their budgets for further cost savings. There will be other budget announcements in September. "Like all government spending, everything's on the table," Hodgson said.

See CUTS page

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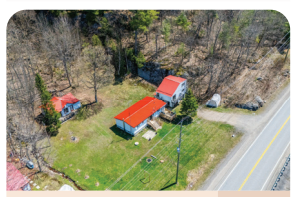
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